

POTENTIAL BASES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF A REVISED APPROACH TO AN  
INTERSTATE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM  
(NEW YORK REGENTS-EDISON COLLEGE)

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November 1, 1973

## Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to explore the potential bases for developing a revised interstate cooperative program between the New York Regents and Edison College. It is not the purpose here to re-hash the causes of the present near-severance of relationships since this would be non-productive. However, in spite of the present situation, it is significant to note that all parties on both sides, including the Edison staff, agree that the basic principal of interstate cooperation remains as a worthy educational goal.

As a very recent appointee to Edison College, the writer has attempted to study the problem as objectively as possible. After reviewing the contents of the original documents and correspondence pertinent to the interstate arrangement in the context of the College's broader educational mission and commitments, it should be quite apparent to the unbiased observer that the original agreement was doomed to failure soon after its inception--at least since the College was established as a separate state college with its own Board of Trustees. On the other hand, the two parties should not let the present realities blind them to the very great benefits that can flow from interstate cooperation. It simply must take a different form in the future, with each party assuming responsibility for determining how it can best contribute to a revised agreement.

## Potential Edison College Contributions

After reviewing the College's current and projected programs and activities with the staff, the following positive Edison contributions to interstate cooperation are worth considering:

- (1) the sharing of part or all of new degree programs;
- (2) the mutual exchange of experiences in developing "Special Assessment" policies and procedures;
- (3) the sharing of the results of Edison College test development, particularly in specialized subject areas;
- (4) the encouragement of students to enroll in special Regents External Degree Programs not offered in New Jersey (example: the A.A.S. in Nursing);

- (5) cooperation in advertising CPEP test centers in New Jersey under New York administration;
- (6) the coordination of enrollment and test fees to avoid any basis for economic competition;
- (7) the sharing of the results of Edison's rapidly developing counseling program, a program which is proving to be very valuable for students working on the external degree;
- (8) the setting up of a regular calendar of meetings of the staffs of the two partners to implement shared efforts; and, finally,
- (9) the development of a workable agreement which could serve as a basis for the development of other interstate cooperative programs.

#### Some Basic Considerations for Agreement

On the assumption that an attempt will be made to develop a new, definite written working agreement with the Regents, there are, in the writer's opinion, two basic considerations which must be kept in mind to avoid any future misunderstandings.

1. There must be written into the agreement provision for the development of broad, open-ended areas for creative cooperation wherein each partner can develop its own independent programs yet agree to share efforts as cited above, including some as yet unidentified. This phase of the agreement should create no binding obligations on either party.
2. A concise statement must be formulated covering specific minimum points of agreement, thereby safeguarding the interests and needs of both signatories. From an Edison point of view, the following appear to be necessary:
  - a. That the College be granted the use of the Regents External Degree Program for the B.S.B.A. and have access to the CPEP tests in keeping with the spirit of the Hollander letter of October 9, 1973.
  - b. That a time frame for any agreement be set up to permit each partner sufficient advance notice for any future revision.

The Regents will certainly have specific conditions to stipulate. As in any professional negotiation, reasonable compromise should be possible.

## Conclusion

As a newcomer looking at Edison College in its present stage of historical development, the writer is of the opinion there is every reason to believe that the College can develop successfully as an independent experimental institution with its own direction for meeting the needs of its constituents and at the same time cooperate with another state enterprise to the mutual benefit of both. We can serve to set an example as equal partners in the nationwide movement in non-traditional education.

Finally, one observes that the real loser in situations of this kind is the student. We cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that meeting the varied educational needs of many kinds of students must always be our basic priority.